

**The College Yearbook as Substantive Experiential Education  
in Journalism: The Professional Placement of Orient  
Yearbook Editors in Media Careers, 1981-1989**

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

by

Laura L. Moorhead

Thesis Director

  
(Advisor's signature)

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

May, 1991

May 4, 1991

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# **I. Introduction to Problem and Purpose of Study**

Typically, journalism students have been faced with the dilemma of whether to strive for outstanding academic accomplishments such as grades or stress gaining solid undergraduate journalism experience. Yet, as national surveys suggest, the answer to this quandary may now be definite: Experience outweighs the need for academic honors for the journalism student (Roosenraad & Wares, 1983, p. 17).

Thus, a problem facing today's journalism student is no longer whether to focus primarily on gaining experience, but, rather, deciding where or which publication to gain undergraduate experience. More specifically, the general problem area to be studied concerns whether experience with a college or university yearbook--one that is produced exercising journalistic principles--meets this experience, and as such serves as a springboard to professional media careers. Presently, this study includes only research gained from former Ball State University *Orient* yearbook editors and staffers who served tenures between 1981-1989. This study will be expanded at a later date to include editors and staffers of the nation's top award-winning yearbooks, of which the *Orient* has been included by national experts.

Traditionally, the role of college or university yearbooks as journalistic publications has been ignored. In fact, presently, there are only a few textbooks that speak directly to the "yearbook journalist" (McGiffin & Suprunowicz, 1974). There are several books on the planning, editing and production of the books; yet, many of these such texts only indirectly deal with developing the journalistic content of yearbooks (Patterson, 1976). Research has tended to focus primarily on the campus newspaper as a place for gaining journalism experience.

Yet, "yearbooks deserve the same quality consideration and respected status as newspapers—both can serve journalism education objectives and both can serve journalism education objectives and both can have a purpose, direction and the ability to make a lasting impression." (Cutsinger, 1989).

Two surveys by Roosenraad and Wares revealed that although choosing a school, maintaining grades and selecting a liberal arts or journalism degree do matter to some extent, they do not carry the weight that previous experience, internships and interviews do, according to those hiring—the editors of the nation's newspapers. In the national survey, 82 percent placed a greater emphasis on practical reporting experience than in education. A comment from the *Dayton Journal Herald* summed up this belief: "Experience tells so much more about a person. It provides a proving ground. Education is only a foundation." (Roosenraad & Wares, 1983, p. 18).

"A degree may get you in, but without evidence of

experience—clips, a portfolio, etc.—the door will slam shut behind you. Participation in high school media programs is the earliest way to gain this experience, followed by the same on the college level" (Price, 1987).

Roosenraad and Wares' survey results are similar to those found in Rob Oglesby's unpublished report of "Factors in Hiring Less Experienced Reporters and Copy Editors."

According to the surveys, the source of journalistic experience does seem to make a difference. Internship experience, especially at the publication where the graduate is seeking employment, was rated best. The great majority (89 percent) of the papers in the Roosenraad and Wares' surveys provide internships, and 62 percent of the respondents said they hire their past interns. (Roosenraad & Wares, 1983, p. 18).

Surveys such as those done by Roosenraad and Wares, and Oglesby investigate the value of experience gained by newspaper work and internships. Research also reveals information about student magazine experience as positive. Also, significant work had even been done about experience gained from student public relations and advertising agencies (England, 1986, p. 37). However, little research has been done about the value of yearbook experience.

According to Linda S. Puntney's thesis, *An Analysis of the College Yearbook: Its Historical Role and Contemporary Status*, Central Missouri State University, 1982, in the 10 years from 1969-1979, more than 100 college yearbooks ceased publication. College yearbooks nationwide were experiencing a decline in popularity,

according to Puntney's thesis. But, 1981 this study also indicated that the future of the college yearbook was relatively bright and that the publication is currently enjoying an upswing in popularity (L. Puntney, 1981).

Puntney's research also indicated that the use of the yearbook has not changed since its conception nearly a century ago. According to her, the book continues to be used as a memory book for all students and as a history/record book for the institution it serves. Yearbooks serve a variety of functions including as records of a specific year, memory books and as teaching tools (Denton, 1976/Magmer & Ronan, 1961). Sheetz (1963) added an educational project for staff members to that list.

Puntney's survey also showed that the content of the college yearbook had changed several times since the turn of the century, but in nearly every instance where the staff had strayed from basic journalistic principles, such as editorializing, the book experienced declining sales. The use of gimmicks in a college yearbook also seems to parallel a decline in popularity of the publication. However, since Puntney's two surveys questioned only schools selected at random and not editors and managers in the journalism field, the thesis has limited application to the perceptions and value of yearbook experience by professionals. (Puntney, 1982).

Yet, one article that appeared in *Quill & Scroll* reports that with the continuing trend towards producing completely documented, historical records of the year, yearbook advisers have recognized the value of a journalistic volume. While the yearbook may not be

as timely as the weekly or monthly news publication, the article claims that it still stands timeless in comparison. "Few students keep copies of their high school newspaper, but a national average of 60 percent of high school students purchase a yearbook because of its long-lasting quality and its ability to tell the complete story of one particular year." (Cutsinger, 1989).

Also, the scope of coverage in a yearbook most often surpasses that of the news publication because of the time that can be allotted and the energy that can be devoted to the planning stages of the volume (Cutsinger, 1989).

Although little research has been done as to the value of college or university yearbook experience and its effects of an individual's work in the so-called "real world," a study by the Journalism Education Association's Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education revealed a definite link between high school yearbook and newspaper publications experience as a factor in college-level writing. This study was done through data available at the American College Testing Program to determine possible differences in college freshman writing samples on the staff of a high school publication—a yearbook or newspaper—and those who had not. Students with experience from either publication scored significantly higher than students without such experience in nearly all criteria selected. (Dvorak, 1988, p. 392-394).

The proposed research and survey, like the previously mentioned study by the Journalism Education Association's Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education, would reveal whether an

increased performance level can be surmised as a result of publication experience, specifically yearbook.

Such a survey is much needed since it will aid in alleviating ignorance and misconceptions about yearbooks by educators, students and professionals alike. This study will attempt to examine the success or lack of professional placement among yearbook journalism—experienced college graduates in media careers. Ball State University journalism educators and students will particularly benefit by gaining specific information about the perceived value of journalistically-sound yearbook experience.

By gathering further data about the existence and use of yearbooks and the role they play, it is hoped that a pathway toward further improving yearbooks as journalistic publications of substantial value will be developed, as well as downplaying the "bastard" perception of yearbooks in the role of journalism education.



## Purpose of Study

A review of of literature found little research about yearbooks as journalistic publications. A purpose of this study was to investigate whether journalistically-sound yearbooks are perceived as springboards to professional media careers or if they are seen as merely memory books of little substance. Also, this study revealed general information about editors (not necessarily editors-in-chief) of award-winning yearbooks. (National awards from Columbia Scholastic Press Association and Associated Collegiate Press that pertain to editorial content, photo-journalistic work and visual design were the basis for books to be considered "journalistically-sound" and "award-winning.")

The following research questions were the basis of the survey and their responses are included in this report:

1. Positions held on yearbook staff and respective years
2. Majors earned at respective college indicating major are....
3. Would you consider your degree media related?
4. How did you first become involved in your college yearbook?

5. How were you compensated for your yearbook experience?
6. Did your degree program require student publications involvement?
7. Did your college consider the yearbook a laboratory experience or an extra-curricular experience?
8. How would you describe your yearbook's editorial philosophy?
9. Please recount any known awards for journalistic excellence your yearbook(s) received under your tenure as editor or staffer.
10. Was it your intent to get a communications/media-related job out of college?
11. Do you consider your first (perhaps present) job communications/media related?
12. Was the experience gained from your yearbook career a factor in getting your first or any subsequent employment?
13. Did you include yearbook experience on your resume?
14. Did you include yearbook clips (articles, designs, photos or overall pages) in your portfolio?
15. What specific yearbook experiences have aided your present or past on-the-job performance?
16. In your opinion, have your employers looked favorably on your yearbook experience? (Ranking scale response)
17. In an interview or potential employment situation, how was yearbook experience regarded? (Ranking scale response)
18. How do you think that the professional media look upon yearbook experiences?
19. Do you regret having devoted time or involvement with the yearbook as a means of gaining experience?

20. Would you recommend a yearbook experience to today's college students?
21. I would rate my yearbook experience as beneficial to my education and preparation for my career as....
22. Upon entry-level employment my annual salary was in the range of....
23. My present individual, annual salary is in the range of....
24. Present and former employer contacts.

## II. Literature Review

Although research regarding yearbooks is particularly limited, there has been some historical information gained, along with data about design and writing. Even though much of this information is not necessarily applicable, it does grant a better understanding of the general field.

A study conducted by Daniel J. Sutherland (1977) compiled information from the graduates of the College of Communications at the University of Tennessee. The data collected included the graduates': employment after graduation, salary levels and satisfaction, evaluation of employment opportunities, subsequent schooling, evaluation of the college's services and evaluation of the college's faculty and programs. An 80 percent response rate from a sample of 180 graduates was obtained in a two-wave, mail survey.

The data from the study revealed that about one-third of the graduates worked in the field of their major; one-third worked in some other field of communications; and one-third did not work in communications at all. Journalism graduates started out with lower salaries than graduates with other majors. Also, journalism majors showed significantly lower current salary levels. About

half of the respondents thought that employment opportunities in communications were worse than their impression of opportunities in other professions in general. One-third of the graduates had taken some courses or had begun work on another degree. Only 16 percent of those that worked on a second degree studied in some field of communications.

According to the survey, graduates evaluated technical skill courses significantly more positively than other kinds of courses. In addition, the data and comments of respondents suggested the need for increased practical experience in the curriculum. Extensive tests of association also revealed that large portions of negative feedback in several area of investigation could be related to one of the college's three departments.

Sutherland's literature review explains the methods and results of past follow-up studies. Also, survey-methods literature is compared to educational research literature. He concludes that the follow-up study performed at the College of Communications suggests areas of investigation that should be further explored at other communications schools, and that the follow-up study, when conducted through quality survey research methods, is a valuable tool in the effort to improve educational programs.

Another survey, somewhat similar to the aforementioned, was done at the University of South Carolina by Elizabeth Brown Dickey (1978). This thesis is a study of the school's journalism alumni from 1970-1977. A major purpose of the study was to see how alumni viewed the quality of the education they received and how their courses prepared them for journalism employment. This study also

provides data on employment, salary ranges, job satisfaction and such demographics as sequence affiliation, gender and degree.

A primary problem facing journalism administrators at the USC College of Journalism has been a lack of factual information about alumni. From the data collected in this study, officials may now attack the problem with raw figures and percentages.

A mail questionnaire was sent to 999 alumni from 1970-1977. After a second mailing, the return reached 44.7 percent—enough to give credibility to the data. A simple frequency count of all items from the 34 questions and cross tabulation of relevant attitudinal items with demographics were calculated. Mean, median and mode also were computed to assist in evaluating some of the data.

Among the study's findings: 75 percent of the respondents are employed in full-time, journalism-related jobs; 90 percent are employed; 70 percent would major in journalism again; 72 percent prefer assignment to either advertising/public relations, broadcast or news-editorial sequences; 91 percent found the grading process in journalism fair; 71 percent thought advisement was satisfactory. No findings surfaced regarding student publication experience.

Another similar study assessed the attitudes of Indiana University journalism majors about media experience as a supplement to their academic program. This thesis, conducted by Barbara Douglas Gill (1973), provided a profile of student attitudes about the importance of media experience before graduation, career interests and perceptions of faculty, and employer expectations. It focused

on the most obvious source of student media employment—the university newspaper, the *Indiana Daily Student*—although other media experiences were considered also.

A questionnaire mail survey was administered to a population sample of 100, one-third of the majors enrolled in the department spring semester, 1971. The 82 usable returns were evaluated both in terms of the data produced and the effectiveness of the methodology used.

Based on the study's findings, nearly half the respondents had not worked for the student newspaper; at least half of these definitely did not plan to do so. Most of them reported a lack of time or interest. A high percentage of students who expressed interest in future newspaper work had worked on the *IDS* and other publications. ("Other publications" would include the school's yearbook. However, the survey failed to report what percentage of respondents had worked for the *Arbutus* yearbook.)

More than half the respondents did not think any media experience should be required for majors, and as many believed that their coursework provided sufficient preparation for media work.

Among other things Gill concluded that surveys of this type have limited utility as evaluative measure because they can only gather opinion and compare differences in perceived attitudes. They fail to provide sufficient information to determine the source of the attitudes or the reasons for the disparities of perception among the groups studied.

Roger Dean Christensen (1973) studied the University of Texas' public relations curriculum via an evaluation by 1960-1971 graduates. The thesis describes survey respondents' ratings on individual courses and their suggestions for change in the public relations sequence. In addition, the thesis contains statistical information on graduates' job progress and job satisfaction and relates that information to the survey respondents' course evaluations. The thesis concludes with recommendations for improvement of the public relations sequence.

"A Comparison of the Expectations of Journalism Educators and Professionals—City and Managing Editors," by Jan Robbins Brock (1973), examines the opinions and perceptions of two groups of journalism educators, professionally and academically oriented, and two groups of professional journalists, city and managing editors. For some time there has been controversy between the educators and professionals as to what is best for the young journalist.

According to the thesis, some educators claim he or she needs more research and theory while professionals want more practical skills and experience. The two groups seem polarized between research and practical training. The question is: Are journalism educators and professionals really polarized or do they merely perceive the "green eyeshade"—"chi-square" researcher dichotomy.

The sample consisted of one academic and one professional educator from each of the 61 accredited journalism schools and one city editor and one managing editor from a stratified sample of 100 daily United States newspapers, according to the study. Also,



each subject received a mailed questionnaire requesting for 1) demographic data, 2) his or her opinions of various aspects of journalism, such as research, interviewing, knowledge of government, writing skills, editing, etc., and 3) his or her perceptions of how a journalism educator/editor would rank those same terms.

Generalizing, the study reports that there was much agreement among the opinions on each of the topics ranked. Their perceptions of the other group, however, while usually being different from their own opinions were not accurate, according to the survey. This pattern (occurring on the particular terms examined) led to the conclusion that the differences in expectations between educators and editors are perceived and not real.

Such a finding, according to the study, could lead to better understanding between editors and educators, journalism schools and newspapers.

Paul S. Swensson, a former editor of the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, executive director of the Newspaper Fund, a university professor and associate director of the American Press Institute, wrote an article (1977) on what professional newspaper editors look for when hiring staffers straight from college.

According to Swensson, although newspaper editors rarely perceive themselves as teachers or leaders, they are, particularly when interviewing potential young employees. Also, the editor looks "beyond the applicant to the teacher who had shaped the reporting abilities of the young mind" (1977, p. 19). The editor hires or

does not hire the young applicant depending on the perceived image the college or university the applicant attended and the image of a reporting or editing teacher.

According to Swennson, three out of four interview and none of every 10 letters of application fail at once because the applicant merely wanted a job. Also, he suggests that even when searching furiously for a warm body to cover the court house, the editor will reject the applicant who brings nothing (no experience) to the job.

Swennson adds that editors shy away from straight "A" students for sensible reasons. But, they want proof of a student's capacity to perform well, especially under pressure. Most editors, according to him, will examine the student's bylined stories from the campus newspaper or other publications. Faculty references and evaluations are fine provided the editor knows and respects that faculty member.

Two surveys of national and Florida editors report the in the newspaper job market, solid undergraduate news experience weighs more than a graduate's journalism degree, grades or major (Roosenraad & Wares, 1983, p. 17).

As mentioned in the introduction to the problem and purpose of this study, although selecting a school, maintaining grades and choosing a liberal arts or journalism degree do matter, they do not carry the weight that previous experience, internships and interviews do, according to editors of the nation's newspapers.

According to an article about these surveys, the choice between going all-out at the campus paper or hometown daily or hitting the books for top grades comes early. Though getting a good GPA and maintaining a strong professional track record are not exclusive of each other, the experience at Florida indicates few students are able to excel at both. And with many factors working against today's graduates getting a job with a daily newspaper, that choice is important.

To find out what today's journalism employers are looking for in a new employee, a random survey of 114 newspapers nationwide was conducted. The sample was drawn from dailies with at least 50,000 circulation. Completed and returned surveys numbered 74 for a response rate of 65 percent. Results from this survey were quite similar to another 1982 poll of only Florida editors. (Rossenraad & Wares, 1983, p. 17).

According to Roosenraad and Wares, 59 percent of the national respondents said they would hire a just-out-of-college reporter, although not all editors who said "yes" were particularly happy about hiring these graduates.

Also, according to these researchers, the experience verses academics questions was settled strongly on the side of experience. The national survey listed six factors—interviews, grades, college attended, clips, work experience and company tests—and weighted the answers according to their ranking by editors. The factors of experience, interviews and clips finished a strong 1, 2, 3 while the academic factors of grades, college and test finished far below in that order.

The Florida survey showed a similar preference: Interviews were considered important or very important by 93 percent of the Florida editors, with experience (86 percent), internships (83 percent) and clips (75 percent) following. Company tests were rated stronger by the Florida editors (74 percent), while other "academic" factors such as having a journalism degree or a high GPA were rated much lower (52 and 48 percent, respectively). (Rossenraad & Wares, 1983, p. 18).

The study went on to conclude that the type of degree was a far less important factor than the experience record of the graduate. In the national survey, 82 percent placed a greater emphasis on practical reporting experience than on education.

Also, as indicated by the study, the source of the experience does not seem to make a difference. Internship experience, especially at the paper where the graduate is seeking employment, was rated best. The great majority (89 percent) of the papers in the national survey provide internships, and 62 percent of the respondents said they hire their past interns.

Rossenraad and Wares write that the most important finding of the survey is just how heavily the majority of editors weigh the record of practical experience when considering prospective employees. The authors say it simply isn't enough for would-be journalists to learn about the profession; they've got to get hands-on experience while they are still in college.

Although student newspapers seem to have attracted the most

research and interest regarding worth and practical experience, student advertising and public relations agencies have received significant interest as well. According to an article by Bill England (1987) more and more such programs are operating to give students hands-on experience and to give programs added visibility. In fact, this author says experience in hands-on involvement with actual advertising is the drawing card for most students.

In a survey for the Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education in May, 1982, which was represented by members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and Speech Communication Association (SCA) a stunningly high ranking was given to the internship experience. "(This ranking) indicates that much more attention needs to be paid by educators and practitioners alike to assure the high quality of such experiences." (Anderson, 1986).

A research project by Tonya Carrick (1990) suggests that some colleges and universities report that their public relations students earned hands-on experience through internships and student publications. Yearbooks would be included in the general grouping of "student publications."

Another thesis assessed the extent to which practicing editors regarded formal journalism education as a necessary preparation for individuals involved in newspaper work in Nigeria. (Onyedike, 1985).

For this thesis, two survey instruments were used to gather the data: a 46-item questionnaire and personal interview with 20 editors. The population of the study was classified into two groups: degree and non-degree holding editors.

Both groups of editors agreed that degree-holding journalists were more knowledgeable or better skilled than non-degree holding journalists. The degree-holding editors were evenly split on their ratings in the knowledge of newspaper economics but their non-degree counterparts overwhelmingly chose non-degree holding journalists.

According to the study, both groups of editors agreed that non-degree holding journalists were more knowledgeable or better skilled than degreed journalists regarding knowledge of press laws, ability to design and layout newspapers pages and display of dependability. Based on the findings, key recommendations included: 1) the introduction of internships for journalism students and 2) inclusion of working journalists and lawyers as part of the teaching staff.

Martha H. Byrd (1976) conducted a study about the status of professional training for the book publishing industry, with particular attention to the possible role of schools or departments of journalism or communications in providing such training.

Two surveys were conducted by Byrd, one of journalism schools or departments and one of publishing houses, to determine attitudes

toward training and options on the need for and content of additional training. The survey of journalism schools revealed that most journalism schools do not believe they are currently providing adequate training for the book publishing industry, primarily because such training is not within their budgetary restrictions or basic goals. The survey of publishing houses revealed that publishers perceive a need for professional training but are not willing to give it wholehearted financial support.

The conclusion of the study was that journalism schools should do more to create awareness of book publishing to its students, whole a comprehensive School of Publishing should be established at some university, in close association with a university press, to provide professional training for potential employees of the industry.

A survey of Illinois public high school top award-winning newspapers and yearbooks attempted to find and record some common characteristic among Illinois public high schools that consistently produced top award-winning newspapers and yearbooks. This study examined four basic categories for possible common characteristics: 1) the school, 2) the administrators, 3) the adviser, 4) the students producing these publications. (Hollingsworth, 1975).

High schools were selected for this survey on the basis that their publications won either the Gallup Award, given by the Quill and Scroll Society; the Medalist Award, given by Columbia Scholastic Press Association, at least two out of the past three years.

Questionnaires were sent to the principals of schools producing top award-winning publications and to the advisers of these publications. A 75 percent response from the principals and an 80 percent response from the advisers were received. (Hollingsworth, 1975).

From the information gained from this study, it was found that most top award-winning publications are being produced, year after year, in large, suburban schools that have principals supporting publications, journalism included in the curriculum, publication laboratories during school hours, qualified and capable advisers, who were hired to advise a publication, and a high caliber of student staffs producing publications.

Linda Puntney (1982) completed an analysis of the college yearbook: Its historical role and contemporary status. According to the study, college and university yearbooks nationwide were experiencing a decline in popularity and the staffs of the books apparently had little understanding of why the student body had stopped purchasing the publication. The study examines that decline in popularity of the college yearbook during that time to determine how extensive the decline was and to define the conditions surrounding the publication that may have been instrumental in bringing about this decline.

Two surveys were taken as part of Puntney's thesis. In 1975, a nationwide survey was taken of 10 percent of the total listing in the *College Blue Book*. Using the same questionnaire, an update survey was sent in 1982 to 30 schools selected at random from those who had returned the initial questionnaire in 1975.



Telephone interviews were conducted with 10 percent of the respondents in the 1975 survey and six campuses were visited for case studies. All of the specific information was updated in 1982 telephone interviews.

The research indicates that the use of the yearbook has not changed since its conception nearly a century ago. The book continues to be used as a memory book for all students and as a history/record book for the institution it serves.

The study also showed that the content of the college yearbook had changed several times since the turn of the century, but in nearly every instance where the staff had editorialized, the book experienced declining sales. Editorialized content appears to be one of the major factors in the decline in popularity of the college yearbook. The use of gimmicks in a college yearbook also seems to parallel a decline in popularity.

The financial picture of the college yearbook ranges from total subsidy by the institution to those schools that receive no subsidy at all. According to this study, most college yearbooks must depend on individual subscriptions to fund the bulk of their budget. Recent cuts in institutional funding and increases in inflation require that the books be more self supporting than in the past.

Repeatedly, the research indicates that students, no matter what the social conditions of the times, prefer that the college yearbook reflect the story of the year in simple, direct terms. They are interested in seeing themselves pictured in a book with

which they can identify.

The research indicates that the future of the college yearbook is relatively bright and that the publication is currently enjoying an upswing in popularity. Although sales showed a marked decline from 1968-1979 things began to improve a marked decline from 1968 to 1979 things began to improve. Currently more students are picking up or purchasing the yearbook than they did in the 1970s but not as many are receiving the book as in 1963.

A study by the Journalism Education Association's Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education (1988) revealed that college freshmen with experience in high school publications perform better in writing tests. The study compared the freshman writing samples of students who had worked on the staff of a high school publication—a newspaper or yearbook—and those who had not. Also, while the present study does not examine effects of a journalism class *per se*, in many schools publications experience is affiliated with some form of language arts credit offered through a formal journalism or publications class, and this association is thought to stimulate acquisition of writing and thinking competencies valued by today's curriculum designers.

Research from this study revealed comparisons of advanced placement and senior honors composition classes with journalism students of similar ability. In the 1982 study of students in 12 Ohio high schools, the data analysis showed that journalism writing skills made fewer errors in most of the writing skill criteria than did non-journalism students. Journalism students scored significantly higher than non-journalism students in all

four criteria selected as measures of information presentation and selection judgment: information, omission, opening sentence, editorializing and errors in fact. Further, the study found journalism students made significantly fewer errors in word context, spelling, redundancy, punctuation and agreement.

ACT officials selected 18 colleges and universities that were representative of those institutions participating in their College Outcome Measures Project, and then all files were matched of students attending those institutions for whom both ACT Assessment scores from high school and the college writing samples from the CORP battery of tests and exercises were available. Records of 1,204 students were used as the basis for comparisons.

When these 1,204 college freshmen were divided into four groups according to ACT English Assessment scores to equalize abilities in language in language arts competencies, those with high school newspaper or yearbook experience had higher writing scores than did non-publications students in 13 of the 16 COMP test comparisons, with four of those scores significantly higher.

A study conducted by Casey Nichols (1987) probed the problem of copy submission among high school yearbook programs, the researcher sought to : a) clarify the degree of the problem; b) identify causes at the school, company representative, and company levels; and c) identify practices at these three levels that have in the past and can in the future help to alleviate the problem.

This research was carried out in two basic stages. First, surveys were mailed to high school yearbook advisers, yearbook publishing

company sales representatives and yearbook publishing company executives. Second, follow-up interviews were conducted with samples from each of these groups. The purpose in using this two-stage method was to first, gather general data from a sampling of advisers and representatives and from all companies through the surveys, and second, gather specific information as to the relationships to deadline problems. Both surveys and interviews were aimed at the six questions at hand as well as to gather descriptive material.

As can be seen by this diverse collection of research, limited work has been done regarding journalistically-sound yearbooks. Although some work has been conducted as to the value and perceptions of newspapers, an insignificant amount has yet to be researched for yearbooks. Thus, there is an urgent need for an investigation as to whether journalistically-sound yearbook experience provides substantive experiential education and as such serves as a springboard to professional media careers.

### III. Methodology

Three mail surveys were used to conduct the research for this study. The first survey was sent to Columbia Scholastic Press Association, Associated Collegiate Press, Journalism Education Association and five nationally-recognized yearbook judges in order to compile a list of the nation's top award-winning (with regard to journalistic execution) yearbooks for 1981-1989. Since only the names of the top 10 books were requested no actual survey forms were included in the mailing. A cover letter was attached to explain the reason for the survey and to ask for prompt returning of the names via the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope (see appendix A). It was hoped that because the organizations and the individuals should have an interest in yearbook journalism that most would return the survey. Funds for the printing of the letters were provided by the researcher and the researcher adviser.

The second cover letter/survey, which was examined by two faculty members of Ball State University's Department of Journalism, was sent to advisers and editors of the 10 most mentioned yearbooks in the survey. A survey requesting the names and addresses of former editors and staffers between the years of 1981 and 1989, that university's alumni office address, university's address and any additional comments was enclosed (see appendix B). A cover letter was also attached to explain the reason for the survey and to ask for prompt returning of the survey via the enclosed,

self-addressed, stamped envelope. (see appendix C). Funds for printing the surveys was provided by the researcher and the researcher adviser.

The third and primary survey conducted for this research was sent to former Ball State *Orient* editors-in-chief and editors from the years of 1981-1989. This survey, although the main focus of this study, can ultimately act as a pretest to a similar national survey. A survey was sent to each address (see appendix D). A cover letter was also sent to explain the reason for the survey and to ask for prompt returning of the survey (see appendix E). Funds for printing the surveys was provided by the researcher and the researcher adviser.

This survey was conducted to learn several things about experiences, opinions and value of yearbook experience, specifically experience gained from the *Orient* yearbook. Survey questions were developed by the researcher and the research adviser. The survey was also examined by another faculty member of Ball State University's Department of Journalism.

After the surveys were returned, the responses were tallied by the researcher and the researcher adviser. The results were then quantified as to learn percentages of each question. Also, questions that the survey was designed to answer were analyzed to see what information could be told of the yearbook experiences, opinions and values. Such information was quantified to give an overall view of the *Orient* yearbook experience in regard to effectiveness, preparedness and professional placement.

After all the information was received and quantified, it was possible to project a profile of the *Orient* yearbook experience. Each question from the survey was evaluated to see what characteristics, alike or different, they have in common. If a majority of those surveyed responded, certain statements about the *Orient* yearbook experience can be made.

The results of this survey not only investigate whether journalistically-sound yearbooks are perceived as springboards to professional media careers or if they are seen in placement as merely memory books of little substance, but will aid in the improvement of the *Orient* yearbook experience. Also, perhaps the bottom line can be eventually recognized: "yearbooks can be journalistic. Not only can they be journalistic, but they must be if yearbooks meet the need of the contemporary audience now and in the future" (Cutsinger, 1989). Also, the rudiments as well as intricacies of a practical journalism education can be realized through experience with a journalistically-sound college yearbook program.

"Yearbooks deserve the same quality consideration and respected status as newspapers—both can serve journalism education objectives and both can have a purpose, direction and the ability to make a lasting impression. (Cutsinger, 1989).

## IV. Findings

### Survey 1

The first survey had an overall response rate of 100 percent, meaning that the eight persons or organizations of the sample population of the eight authorities on award-winning yearbooks responded. Based on the responses, the top award-winning publications in the nation from 1981-1989 are as follow in alphabetical order:

- *Sun Devil Spark*, Arizona State University
- *Cactus*, University of Texas at Austin
- *Chinook*, Washington State University
- *Corolla*, University of Alabama
- *Gem of the Mountain*, University of Idaho
- *Orient*, Ball State University
- *Royal Purple*, Kansas State University
- *Sooner*, University of Oklahoma
- *Talisman*, Western Kentucky University
- *Tower*, Northwest Missouri State University

### Survey 2

The second survey had an overall response rate of 90 percent, meaning that editors or advisers from nine of the aforementioned 10 yearbooks responded. The actual results of this survey are not included in this study since the information gained includes names



and addresses of former editors and editors-in-chief of these nine books, and the information is to be used in future research. The results may be gained from this study's research advisor, Michael Price of Ball State University's Department of Journalism.

### **Survey 3**

The final survey had an overall response rate of 53 percent, meaning that 21 former *Orient* editors and editors-in-chief of the test survey's sample population of 40 responded.

The responses indicate that of those surveyed, 38 percent where on staff for two years, 24 percent where on staff for one year, 19 percent were on staff for three years and another 19 percent were on staff for four years.

## **Profile of Former Orient Editors from 1981-1989**

### **Areas of study and degrees earned**

According to the survey, 95 percent of those questioned were journalism majors. Of this percentage, 62 percent identified the sequence studied. And of this percentage, 19 percent studied education, while 14 percent studied advertising. Another 14 percent studied magazine writing, and yet another 14 percent studied photography. Ten percent studied public relations, and 5 percent studied news editorial. Communications, psychology, political science and public administration were the other majors mentioned as areas of study. Of the former *Orient* editors and editor in chiefs surveyed, 81 percent had bachelors of science and 19 percent had masters. Only five percent of the bachelors of science degrees had been received from a university besides Ball State. Of those responding with masters, 5 percent of the degrees were received elsewhere than Ball State.

### **Positions held on yearbook staffs**

Since this question allowed for several responses per person, 86 percent of those responding held more than one position during their tenure. Also, oftentimes staffers held the same positions for more than one year; this accounts for the majority of those responding (62 percent).

Based on survey results, 71 percent of former staffers were writers sometime during their tenure; this number includes if a person was a writer for one or more years. Forty-three percent represents the staffers' experience as writers at least once.

The position of editor in chief was the second most common response, with 57 percent of those responding having been editor in chief. Thirty three percent of those responding held this position at least once.

The survey revealed that 56 percent of the respondents held editor titles during their tenure. Thirty-eight percent of them had been editors at least once.

The position of assistant editor was the next most common response. Twenty-four percent of the respondents had been assistant editors during their tenure. This number also represents those who held the position at least once.

Although the survey revealed that 29 percent of the respondents had been photographers during their tenure, only 14 percent had been photographers at least once.

Respondents indicated that 19 percent had been designers during their tenure and the same amount had held the position at least once.

The rest of the findings for this question are relatively close. In fact, for each of the following five questions the percentage

found is either 5 percent or 10 percent. Respondents indicated that 10 percent had been layout/design personnel and the same amount had held the position at least once. Another 10 percent had been graduate assistants while they were on staff. Five percent of the respondents had been editorial assistants and another 5 percent had been production workers as well.

#### **Was the degree considered media related**

One hundred percent of the respondents wrote that their degrees were media related.

#### **First involvement with a college yearbook**

Of those surveyed, 57 percent became involved in college yearbook through their previous high school involvement. Thirty-three percent became involved after a recommendation from a friend. Recruitment programs, such as summer workshops, were responsible for 14 percent of the respondents' involvement. Ten percent of those surveyed became involved after a teacher's recommendation. And 29 percent of the respondents cited other reasons for their involvement. Reasons included graduate assistantships or voluntarily contacting the yearbook office for work.

#### **Compensation for yearbook experience**

Based on the survey, 43 percent of those questioned received an hourly wage as compensation for their work. Thirty-eight percent of those surveyed had volunteered. Another 14 percent received graduate assistantships, while 10 percent were

paid per story of per print. Another 10 percent received a flat stipend for their work, and 10 percent selected to receive internship or practicum credit instead of another form of payment.

**Degree program requirement of student  
publications involvement**

Since about 1961, Ball State's Department of Journalism has required all journalism students to perform either one practicum or one internship at a student publication or a professional media operation before graduating, according to Marilyn Weaver, Ball State University's Department of Journalism's administrative assistant. Of those surveyed, 43 percent became an *Orient* practicum student in order to fulfill this degree program requirement. Thirty-eight percent used their yearbook experience to meet the requirement, but classified it as an internship. Although the former staffers (67 percent) may have selected to call their experiences either practicums or internships, the work done on the *Orient*, regardless of such titles, was the same.

Also, of those surveyed, 5 percent indicated that they were hired for the *Orient* staff as graduate assistants.

Yet, 16 percent of those answering the survey claimed that their degree program did not require student publications involvement. This is accurate since although the Ball State Department of Journalism requires that a practicum or an internship be completed, it does not require that a student work on any student publication.

### **College's perceived consideration of yearbook experience**

According to 62 percent of the respondents, Ball State considered their work on the yearbook as a lab/practical experience, while 43 percent of the respondents answered that the university considered the experience an extra-curricular one. Another 5 percent of the respondents claimed that the university considered the experience a part-time job.

### **Description of the yearbook's editorial philosophy**

Since this question allowed for several responses per person, 33 percent of those responding cited more than one editorial philosophy.

Based on survey results, 95 percent of those responding claimed that the *Orient's* editorial philosophy was of both positive and negative issue orientation during their tenure. Nineteen percent wrote that the editorial coverage during their tenure included negative and positive events orientation, along with both negative and positive issue orientation. Five percent claimed that their yearbook editorial coverage included positive and negative issue and positive events orientations.

### **Awards won**

Since 76 percent of the responding surveys failed to answer this question, it is invalid. However, since the information is fact and well-known, the needed information regarding the awards, awarding organizations or competitions and the years that the

*Orient* won have been included in this study. Information was compiled through *Orient* records and official records from both the Associated Collegiate Press and the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

The *Orient* received ACP All American Honor ratings from 1981-1988. In 1988, the *Orient* was the first yearbook inducted into the Associated Collegiate Press' ACP Hall of Fame at the University of Minnesota. As a charter member, the book was recognized for its "sustained excellence in national competitions with other college student publications, and for receiving consistently the All American Honor Rating in such evaluation and competition programs." The *Orient* also consistently received an ACP Yearbook Pacemaker from 1981 until 1988. However, the 1989 *Orient* yearbook did not receive either an ACP All American Honor or an ACP Yearbook Pacemaker.

The *Orient* received The Gold Crown from Columbia Press Association from 1982-1985 and then from 1987-1989. The 1986 and the 1989 *Orients* did not receive the award. The 1986 *Orient* received The Silver Crown (comparable to a second place).

Also, the *Orient* consistently won "Yearbook of the Year" by the Indiana Collegiate Press Association from 1981-1989.

### **Intentions after graduation**

Based on survey results, 100 percent of the respondents claimed that it was their intention to get a communications/media-related job out of college.

## **Jobs after graduation**

According to the survey, 95 percent of the respondents considered their first or present job communications/media related. Only 5 percent of the respondents did not consider their first or present work communications/media related. "Yearbook adviser," "feature writer," "statehouse bureau chief," "newspaper page designer," "sports layout editor," "publications specialist," "writer/editor," "photographer," "computer designer" and "art director" were among the job titles of those surveyed.

## **Experience as a factor in gaining employment**

Sixty-two percent of the survey's respondents credited their yearbook experience as a factor in gaining their first or any subsequent employment, while 24 percent found that their yearbook experience helped to a modest degree in gaining work. According to 10 percent of the respondents, though the yearbook experience was beneficial, it was probably not a factor in gaining any employment. Five percent of the respondents stated that their yearbook work had no influence in gaining any employment.

## **Yearbook experience on a resume**

Based on the survey results, 95 percent of the respondents included their yearbook experience on their resumes. Five percent did not include the experience on their resumes.



### **Influence of yearbook work on portfolio**

Seventy-six percent of those surveyed included yearbook clips in their portfolios. Ten percent of those questioned did not use a portfolio in gaining employment, and 14 percent did not include any yearbook clips in their portfolios. Forty-three percent included a few yearbook clips in their portfolios. According to responses, 29 percent of the former editors and editor in chiefs included mostly yearbook clips.

Only 48 percent of the respondents included the actual number of clips included in their portfolios. Of this percentage, 30 percent included 5-6 clips, and another 30 percent used 8-12 clips. Twenty percent used 3-4 clips, while 10 percent included 1-2 clips. Another 10 percent utilized the entire book in their portfolios.

### **Specific yearbook experience that aided present or past job performance**

Eighty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they had gained specific yearbook experience that aided their present or past job performances. However, 19 percent apparently gained no such benefit.

Since this question allowed for several responses per person, 76 percent of those responding cited more than one specific yearbook experience that aided their present or past job performance.

Based on survey results, 38 percent of the former editors or

editor in chiefs cited design skills among specific experiences of value. Another 33 percent stated that writing skills were of importance. And 29 percent found that layout/production skills aided their job performance. Twenty-four percent of those surveyed claimed they gained experience with deadlines, which aided them in their work. Another 24 percent of those questioned gained editing skills that continue to be of benefit. Nineteen percent stated that all respects of the yearbook were applicable in the professional world. Another 19 percent gained valuable experience in managerial and organizational skills. Fourteen percent gained printing knowledge that has benefited them after their college years, along with 14 percent citing the ability to work well with others as another benefit. Yet, another 14 percent gained interviewing skills through their yearbook experience, and 14 percent gained skills regarding payroll and finances. Also, 10 percent gained experience regarding working under pressure, and another 10 percent gained abilities with photography that has been of value in their on-the-job performance.

#### **Employers' perceived regard of yearbook experience**

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents found that their yearbook experience was looked on favorably. Another 43 percent saw no visible response to their yearbook experience by employers. No one cited any negative reactions by employer to yearbook work.

#### **Interview or potential employment and the perceived regard of yearbook experience**

Based on responses, 48 percent of those questioned believed that

in an interview or potential employment situation their yearbook experience was regarded as somewhat positive, while 29 percent believed that their yearbook experience was regarded as very positive. Twenty-four percent found that in such situations their experience was seen as of neutral importance, and no one cited that their yearbook experience as negative.

### **The professional media and its perceived regard of yearbook experience**

Of the respondents, 57 percent indicated that their yearbook experience was regarded as somewhat positive by the professional media. Another 24 percent believed that employers were neutral toward their yearbook experience, and 19 percent found it to be very positive. No response suggested that a negative response had been shown toward yearbook experience.

### **Regrets for time or involvement with the yearbook as a means of gaining experience**

One-hundred percent of the former editors and editors-in-chief did not regret their yearbook experience.

### **Recommending a yearbook experience to today's college students**

Based on survey responses, 95 percent of those questioned would recommend a yearbook experience to today's college students. Five percent did not cite whether they would or would not make such a recommendation, but rather that the recommendation would depend on

the students and their career choices.

**Rating of yearbook experience as beneficial to education  
and career preparation**

Of the respondents, 48 percent rated their yearbook experience as somewhat beneficial to their educations and career preparations. Another 43 percent suggested that the experience was very beneficial, and 5 percent indicated that its value was neutral.

**Annual salary upon entry-level employment**

According to this question's responses, 43 percent received \$10-15K upon entry-level employment. Twenty-nine percent were paid \$15-20K, while 14 percent received \$5-10K. And 10 percent received \$20-25K upon entering the workforce.

**Annual salary at time of survey**

At the time of the survey, 29 percent of the respondents indicated that they are paid \$20-25K a year for their work. Another 24 percent claimed to receive \$30-40K for their work, and 24 percent said they receive \$20-25K as an annual salary. Ten percent of those surveyed indicated that they presently receive \$10-15K percent, and another 5 percent receives \$15-20 per year.

## V. Summary

Generally, employers viewed yearbook experience of former *Orient* editors and editor in chiefs' favorably (57 percent). More than half of these former staffers believed that their yearbook experience benefited them in an interview or potential employment situation (77 percent). They also believed that the professional media regarded their yearbook experience as positive (81 percent). Such findings aid in answering the general problem area of the study, whether experience on a college or university yearbook that is produced exercising journalistic principles meets a journalism student's need for experience, and as such serves as a springboard to professional media careers.

Survey results do, in fact, indicate that yearbook experience serves as a springboard to professional media careers. All of the former editors and editor in chiefs considered their degrees media related (100 percent). Upon graduation, nearly all of the respondents considered their first or present job communications/media related (95 percent). Not only did most of these former staffers include their yearbook experience/work on their resumes or in their portfolios (95 percent and 67 percent, respectively), but more than half credited their yearbook experience as a factor in gaining employment (62 percent). In fact, nearly all rated their yearbook experience as either very or somewhat beneficial to their education and career preparation (91 percent).

According to the survey, more than half of those surveyed also gained at least one specific yearbook experience that has aided them in their present or past job performance (81 percent). A significant number of these people also listed several specific experiences that have been of benefit (76 percent). Writing, editing, design, layout and production and photography skills were among the experiences of benefit. Also, experience with deadlines, interviewing, dealing with payroll and finances, printing and managerial and organizational skills were cited as other benefits. By indicting such specific skills, the respondents are also indicating that they gained basic journalistic principles and skills.

Another indication of the *Orient* yearbook as a journalistic publication is its award-winning tradition. Of the three primary judgments, Associated Collegiate Press, Columbia Scholastic Press and Indiana Collegiate Press Association, the book continually did well from 1981-1989.

Most of the respondents indicated that that the *Orient's* editorial philosophy was of both positive and negative issue orientation (95 percent), another emblem of a journalistic publication. Less than half of the respondents stated that they covered mainly positive and negative events, along with positive and negative issues. No one suggested that the *Orient* covered only positive events, negative events, positive issues or negative issues.

Also, since Ball State's Department of Journalism does not require students to work on any student publication, it can be assumed

that most of the respondents joined the *Orient* because of the perceived journalistic benefits it offered. In fact, many of the students considered their yearbook experiences for the journalism department's requirement of completing either a practicum or an internship in order to gain practical journalistic work experience (67 percent).

Other findings that are indirectly related to the general area problem are dealt with from this point. Generally, people joined the *Orient* staff because of previous high school involvement (57 percent) or after a friend's recommendation (14 percent). Yet, others had a variety of reasons, including graduate assistantships or voluntarily contacting the yearbook office for work (29 percent).

Students on the yearbook typically volunteered or received an hourly wage as compensation for their work (38 percent and 43 percent respectively). Some staffers received other forms of payment ranging from graduate assistantships and flat stipends to payment per story or print to internship or practicum course credit (14 percent, 10 percent, 10 percent and 10 percent respectively).

After graduation these former *Orient* staffers received \$10-25K as their annual salary upon entry-level employment. Most of the respondents received \$10-15K upon entering the workforce (43 percent). Yet, at the time of the survey, respondents were receiving \$10-40K a year for their work. The majority received an annual salary of \$20-25K (29 percent).

Oftentimes *Orient* staffers held more than one staff position during their tenures (86 percent). Typically, staffers were writers sometime during their tenure (43 percent). Most of the respondents began as contributing writers but later became involved with other aspects of the book, such as layout, design and production. Several also held editor or editor in chief titles (38 percent and 33 percent, respectively). Other positions held on staff included photographers, assistant editors, graduate assistants and editorial assistants. Former editors believed that the university considered the yearbook a lab/practical experience (62 percent).

No former *Orient* editors or editors-in-chief who responded to the survey regretted their yearbook experience (100 percent), and they would generally recommend it to today's students (95 percent recommended the yearbook experience and 5 percent said their recommendation would have to be based more on the students and their career choices). Thus, overall, the survey results prove the *Orient* yearbook experience from 1981-1989 to have been a journalistic experience with positive results that are still apparent and relevant today.



## Recommendations for Future Studies

This profile of the college yearbook as substantive experiential education in journalism is an quantitative account based on responses from former *Orient* editors from 1981-1989. While the first two surveys had excellent return rates (100 percent and 90 percent) the third survey had a 53 percent response rate. Thus, there is undoubtedly information that was not obtained.

This study acts as a precursor to a possible national study of the other 9 most mentioned, award-winning yearbooks. The initial surveys of this study (Survey 1 and Survey 2) gives a researcher the primary information and documentation regarding the 10 most award-winning yearbooks from 1981-1989, along with names and oftentimes addresses or contacts of editor in chiefs and editors of these books.

Future researchers should consider administering the third survey of this study on a national level, since, in actuality, administering Survey 3 to former *Orient* editors-in-chief and editors from 1981-1989 was merely a pretest of the survey before national distribution. After further investigation of the survey, some changes may be deemed necessary. However, overall, Survey 3 proved effective in tackling the problem area of this study and could be readministered for national results. A national survey of this type is needed in order to better educate students, professionals and educators of the practical and journalistic

experiences and benefits that yearbooks such as the *Orient* offer.

Another beneficial survey would be one of employers and their attitudes toward yearbook experience.

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## Appendix A

November 14, 1990

Contact  
University/Association  
Address  
City, State

Dear Contact:

As a Ball State student preparing a Honors College thesis on what becomes of former editors of the nation's best yearbooks, I write to you for help.

In my present stage of research, I am in need of a list of schools that have consistently won yearbook [specific award or "awards"] in the 1980s. Michael Price, my thesis advisor, recommended you an an authority in this area.

I would greatly appreciate your returning this list in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you are in contact with any former editor of any of these books, a name and address would be greatly appreciated as well. In order to finish my thesis by the required time, I am hoping to begin tallying the results of the aforementioned by November 27, 1990.

The objective of my research is to determine whether journalistic yearbooks serve as springboards to the professional media or are perceived as merely memory books of little substance by professional editors and managers. The research should also provide the opinions of publishers and editors regarding yearbooks, along with how former yearbook editors are employed.

Thank you for any cooperation given to me with this project, it is much appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact me at the Ball State Orient office, WQ 207, Muncie, IN 47306 or call 317-285-8902. Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

Laura Moorhead  
1990 Orient editor

## Appendix B

*Please complete and return the below survey with the enclosed envelope. If necessary, use back of page. Thank you.*

1981	Editor: _____ Staffers: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Addresses (if known): _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
1982	Editor: _____ Staffers: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Addresses (if known): _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
1983	Editor: _____ Staffers: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Addresses (if known): _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
1984	Editor: _____ Staffers: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Addresses (if known): _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
1985	Editor: _____ Staffers: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Addresses (if known): _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
1986	Editor: _____ Staffers: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Addresses (if known): _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

*Survey continued.*

1987      Editor: \_\_\_\_\_      Addresses (if known): \_\_\_\_\_  
             Staffers: \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_

1988      Editor: \_\_\_\_\_      Addresses (if known): \_\_\_\_\_  
             Staffers: \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_

1989      Editor: \_\_\_\_\_      Addresses (if known): \_\_\_\_\_  
             Staffers: \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_  
             \_\_\_\_\_

Alumni Office:      Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
                         Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                         \_\_\_\_\_  
                         \_\_\_\_\_  
                         \_\_\_\_\_  
                         \_\_\_\_\_

University:      Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                         \_\_\_\_\_  
                         \_\_\_\_\_  
                         \_\_\_\_\_

*Additional comments.*

## Appendix C

January 23, 1991

Editors/Advisers  
University  
Address  
City, State

Dear Editors/Adviser:

As a Ball State student preparing a Honors College thesis on the professional opportunities of former staffers of the nation's best yearbooks, I write to you for help.

Through my primary research with the Associated Collegiate Press, Columbia Scholastic Press Association and various nationally-recognized yearbook leaders, the *Sun Devil* surfaced as one of the most consistently trendsetting, journalistic yearbooks in the country. Thus, I would like to include it in my study.

However, in order for me to continue my work I need the names and, if possible, the addresses of the former *Sun Devil* editors from 1980 to 1989. Also, if there have been any other outstanding yearbook staff members (non-editors in chief) throughout the past decade, I would appreciate their names and addresses as well. If you do not have the current addresses of these former staffers, please include your school's alumni office's address and phone number.

I would greatly appreciate your returning any pertinent information in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. In order to finish my thesis by the required time, I am hoping to begin tallying the results of the aforementioned by February 8, 1991.

The objective of my research is to determine whether journalistic yearbooks serve as springboards to professional media careers or if yearbooks are perceived as merely memory books of little substance by professional editors and managers. The research will also provide the opinions of publishers and editors regarding yearbooks, along with how former yearbook editors are employed.

Thank you for any cooperation given to me with this project; it is much appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact me at the Ball State Orient office, WQ 207, Muncie, IN 47303 or call (317) 285-8902. Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

Laura Moorhead  
1990 Orient editor



## Appendix D

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_)

College attended \_\_\_\_\_

Name of yearbook \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years on staff \_\_\_\_\_

1) Positions held on yearbook staff and respective years \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) Majors earned at respective college indicating major area \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ year degree(s) was earned \_\_\_\_\_

3) Would you consider your degree media related? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4) How did you first become involved in your college yearbook? *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Previous high school involvement ☐ College faculty recommended involvement ☐ Recruitment program  
☐ Recommendation from friend ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

5) How were you compensated for your yearbook experience?

- ☐ Volunteer ☐ Received scholarship (circle full or partial) ☐ Paid a flat stipend  
☐ Paid an hourly wage ☐ Paid per story or per print ☐ Received course credit  
☐ Graduate assistantship ☐ Considered internship or practicum experience  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

6) Did your degree program *require* student publications involvement?

- ☐ None ☐ Yes, other (Please indicate number of years, semesters or quarters of type.)  
Type: ☐ Practicum, \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Internship, \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Volunteer Staff, \_\_\_\_\_

7) Did your college consider the yearbook a laboratory experience or an extra-curricular experience?

- ☐ lab/practical experience ☐ extra-curricular experience ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

8) How would you describe your yearbook's editorial philosophy? *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Positive issue orientation ☐ Both positive and negative issue orientation  
☐ Negative issue orientation ☐ Positive events orientation  
☐ Negative events orientation ☐ Both positive and negative events orientation

- 9) Please recount any known awards for journalistic excellence your yearbook(s) received under your tenure as editor or staffer.

*Please include name of award, awarding organization or competition and respective years.*

*Award*

*Organization*

*Year*

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- 10) Was it your intent to get a communications/media-related job out of college? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 11) Do you consider your first (perhaps present) job communications/media related? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 12) Was the experience gained from your yearbook career a factor in getting your first or any subsequent employment?  
☐ Yes, definitely a factor ☐ To a modest degree ☐ No ☐ Beneficial, but probably not a factor
- 13) Did you include yearbook experience on your resume? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 14) Did you include yearbook clips (articles, designs, photos or overall pages) in your portfolio?  
☐ Yes, exclusively ☐ A few ☐ Mostly yearbook clips ☐ Promotions/sales clips ☐ None ☐ No portfolio  
*If yearbook clips were included to any degree, could you please recount the approximate number and type*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 15) What specific yearbook experiences have aided your present or past on-the-job performance? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
*If yes, could you please give brief references of how such experiences aided you, from management to execution.*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 16) In your opinion, have your employers looked favorably on your yearbook experience?  
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No visible response either way

- 17) In an interview or potential employment situation, how was yearbook experience regarded?  
*Positive:* ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat ☐ Neutral *Negative:* ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat

- 18) How do you feel that the professional media look upon yearbook experiences?  
*Positive:* ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat ☐ Neutral *Negative:* ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat

19) Do you regret having devoted time or involvement with the yearbook as a means of gaining experience?

☐ No ☐ Yes (Please explain a yes response under additional comments area at bottom of page.)

20) Would you recommend a yearbook experience to today's college students? ☐ Yes ☐ No

21) I would rate my yearbook experience as beneficial to my education and preparation for my career as

*Beneficial:* ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat ☐ Somewhat ☐ Neutral ☐ Does not apply to my career

22) Upon entry-level employment my annual salary was in the range of

☐ \$5K-10K ☐ \$10,001-15K ☐ \$15,001-20K ☐ \$20,001-25K ☐ \$25,001-30K ☐ over \$30K

23) My present individual, annual salary is in the range of ☐ \$10,001-15K ☐ \$15,001-20K ☐ \$20,001-25K

☐ \$25,001-30K ☐ \$30,001-\$40K ☐ \$40,001-45K ☐ \$45,001-50K ☐ over \$50K

24) Title or type of first employment after college \_\_\_\_\_

name of company and address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Name of individual hirer \_\_\_\_\_

25) Title or type of subsequent employment \_\_\_\_\_

name of company and address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Name of individual hirer \_\_\_\_\_

26) Title or type of subsequent employment \_\_\_\_\_

name of company and address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Name of individual hirer \_\_\_\_\_

27) Title or type of PRESENT employment \_\_\_\_\_

name of company and

address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of individual hirer \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Please add here or attach any comments:*

**ON BACK:** If possible, could you please provide the names and addresses of any exemplary writers, editors, designers, photographers on your staff(s) that would aid in this survey. (If addresses are a problem, we will be happy to contact your college's alumni office if you would provide staffers' names.)

## Appendix E

April 20, 1991

Former Orient Editor or Staffer  
Address  
City, State

Dear Former Orient Editor or Staffer:

As a Ball State student preparing a Honors College thesis on the professional opportunities of former staffers of the nation's best yearbooks, I write to you for help.

Through my primary research with the Associated Collegiate Press, Columbia Scholastic Press Association and various nationally-recognized yearbook leaders, the Orient surfaced as one of the most consistently trendsetting, journalistic yearbooks in the country. I now appeal to your Orient loyalty since the book and its former editors and outstanding staffers will play a primary role in my thesis.

Yet, in order for me to continue my work, I am in need of information from former yearbook staffers regarding their college publications experience. Although I will eventually survey other former editors and outstanding staffers from 10 other yearbooks, I am initially contacting former Orient yearbook staffers in order to pretest the questionnaire.

I would greatly appreciate your returning the enclosed survey in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. In order to finish my thesis by the required time, I am hoping to begin tallying the results of the aforementioned by April 22, 1991.

The objective of my research is to determine whether journalistic yearbooks serve as springboards to professional media careers or if yearbooks are perceived as merely memory books of little substance by professional editors and managers. The research will also provide the opinions of publishers and editors regarding yearbooks, along with where former yearbook editors have been employed.

Thank you for any cooperation given to me with this project; it is much appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact me at the Ball State Orient office, 207, Muncie, IN 47303 or call (317) 285-8902. Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

Laura Moorhead  
1990 Orient editor